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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 0419

C O N F I D E N T I A L BASRAH 000113

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SUNNI TRIBAL LEADER CONCERNED ABOUT CONTINUED VIOLENCE

REF: BASRAH 105

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,
Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b)

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11. (C) On July 2, the Regional Coordinator (RC) met with Sheikh Adnan Majeed al-Ghanim, the head of the al-Ghanim tribe. The RC opened the meeting by expressing his wishes for the rapid recovery of the sheikh's son, who was wounded in an assassination attempt on June 12 in Basrah. The RC also inquired about the sheikh's recent trip to Baghdad. Sheikh Adnan responded that he met with Vice President Tarek al-Hashemi and a political officer at the U.S. Embassy on June 20.

12. (C) The sheikh alleged that local Shia militias, backed by Iran, are intensifying their violent campaign against Sunnis with the intention of driving them out of the region. The sheikh said that in the past several days eight people have been killed and he himself evaded an assassination attempt in Zubair. Two days after the failed attempt, the sheikh received a written death threat, which he believed originated from Iranian intelligence. The sheikh told the RC that Governor Mohammed al-Wa'eli had not delivered on promises to bring the militias under control and that the Iraqi army and police are of no help because they are linked to the militias.

13. (C) The sheikh asserted that between 800 and 1,000 Sunni families have left the area to seek safety in Mosul, Bayji, Tikrit, and, for the affluent ones, Syria. He noted that he had decided to move his tribe, which he claimed to be the biggest Sunni clan in southern Iraq, to Mosul. He reversed his decision after other local Sunni leaders convinced him that the tribe's departure would have catastrophic consequences for the Sunnis remaining in Basrah.

14. (C) Sheikh Adnan inquired about the possibility of Sunni leaders obtaining refugee status in the United States. The RC expressed the hope that Sheikh Adnan would not leave Basrah. The sheikh requested money from the United States for members of the Sunni community, who out of fear are staying in their homes and not opening their businesses. The RC made it clear that his office had no funds to disburse but would ensure that the current plight of the Sunnis in Basrah is brought to the attention of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and to Washington.

15. (C) Comment: Sheik Adnan's description of the effect the violence in Basrah is having on the Sunni community echoes what we have heard from other Sunni contacts. The declaration of the state of emergency in Basrah has not decreased the level of violence and the threats directed against the Sunnis, and unless an effective security clampdown begins soon, the departure of

Sunni families could turn into an exodus. End Comment.

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